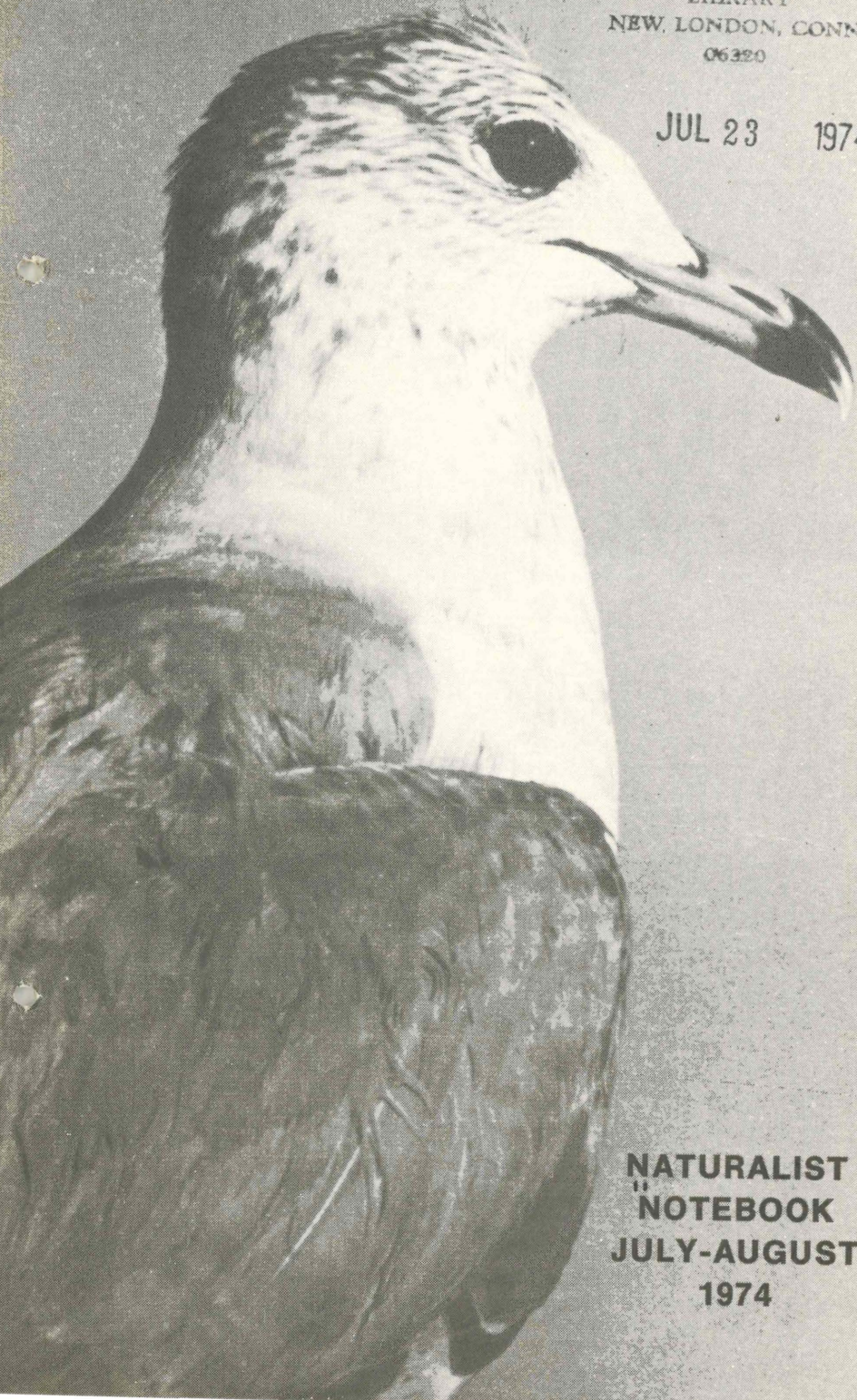
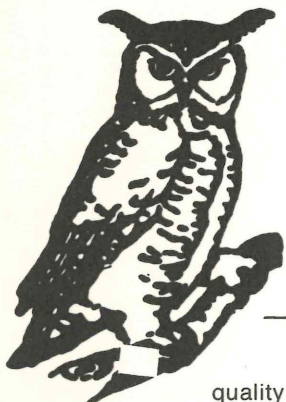


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**NATURALIST
"NOTEBOOK
JULY-AUGUST
1974**



NATURALIST NOTEBOOK

JULY-AUGUST 1974

seeking a
quality environment
through education

FRONT COVER:

Photo by Ken Karsten—The black ring on the bill of this bird identifies it as a ring-billed gull, commonly seen along the shore.

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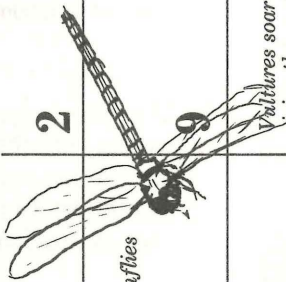


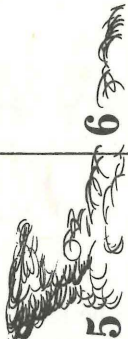
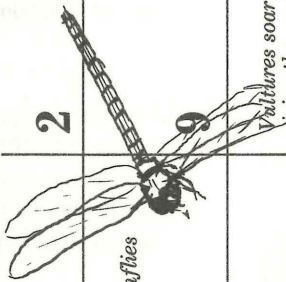


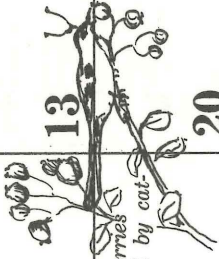



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NATURE'S CALENDAR

by Trudy Gardner

	<p>Weed, cultivate and hope— young rabbits everywhere</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> 	 <p>3</p>	<p>Full Thunder Moon</p>  <p>4</p>	 <p>5</p> <p>6</p>
<p>Hunters of the Air—Dragonflies</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p>	 <p>9</p>	<p>Honeysuckle vine—delights bum- blebees</p>  <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>17</p>		
<p>Black-eyed Susans dot fields</p> <p>14</p>	 <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>altitudes soar on rising thermals</p>			<p>Blackberries relished by cat- birds</p>  <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>Flying squirrels roam by night</p> <p>22</p>	 <p>23</p>	<p>A touch of road side beauty— chicory grows.</p> <p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>26</p> <p>27</p> 
<p>28</p>	<p>Spice of July Wild Mint—</p>  <p>29</p>			
				<p>31</p> <p>30</p>

JULY 1974

SUMMER—

THE TIME OF BABY BIRDS

Summer is the time of baby birds. The woods are filled with the peeping sounds of the young. Depending on the species, the birds will be in all stages of development from newborns to flying young who follow the parents around still begging for handouts. Birds such as robins will have finished a brood of young by July and be starting a second family, while others like the goldfinch and cedar waxwing do not even begin nesting until late July or August.

With so many birds nesting in this area and the large numbers of baby birds present, many are found by people who are then confronted with the question of what to do with these youngsters. Here are some suggestions.

If they are very young (virtually no feathers and eyes still closed) the odds are very slim that they will survive except with the mother. If they have fallen from a nest or a nest has been knocked or taken down, it should be put back immediately. Handling the young will not result in the parents deserting them.

Well-developed young are also sometimes encountered. These are fully feathered birds that in many cases can even fly a little bit. In most cases these are birds that have left the nest a little early.

These should be left alone as they can fend for themselves quite well. If there are cats or other predators known to be around, move them to a protected spot nearby. The young's calls will allow the parents to locate it.

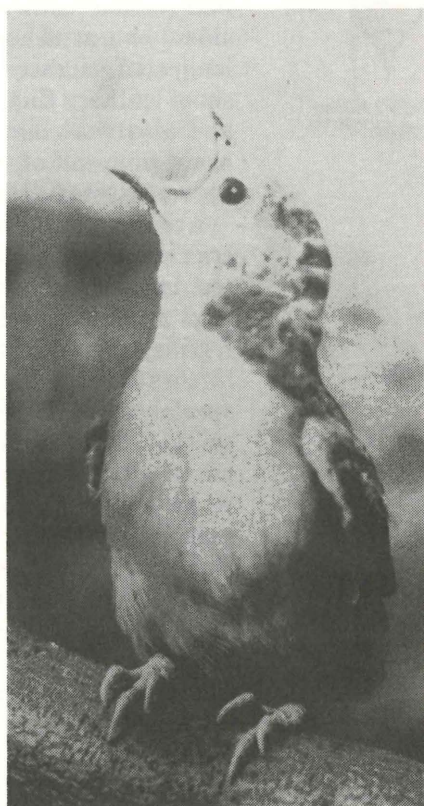
If you encounter a situation where there is no way to return the young safely to the wild and you find yourself the adopted parent of one or more young birds, here are some things to do.

1. All young birds start out on an insect diet. Do not attempt to feed bird seed or bread.
2. The ideal food is insect or worms, but difficulty in securing these mean a substitute should be found. The best is canned dog food.
3. Feed using blunt end tweezers with a piece of dog food (moistened is best) and place meat well down in the bird's throat so it can swallow it.
4. Feed until it no longer opens its mouth for more.

5. DO NOT GIVE WATER. Dribbling water down the bill may result in its being drawn into the lungs as the bird breathes which will kill it eventually. Enough water is obtained through the food the bird gets.
6. A complete feeding once every three hours is adequate. Do not feed at night but give a good feeding about 8:00 P.M. and feed again first thing in the morning.
7. If the bird is thick billed as it grows older (sparrow, cardinal, grosbeak) start putting some bird seed in the cage with it. Once it starts eating on its own, add some gravel and a small dish of water and discontinue meat feeding.
8. If the bird is thin billed (warbler, oriole, robin, etc.) meat diet will be necessary until they can fly.
9. Container for the bird can be a box or cage, but will need a top as the bird gets older and more active.
10. Special heat is not necessary as room temperature will suffice unless there are no feathers on the bird. A light bulb over the container will suffice in this case.

Always remember that being a substitute for the parent birds is extremely difficult and the odds of your successfully releasing a fledged bird are very much against you. If you become foster parents of a baby bird and want to know more about caring for it, feel free to contact us at the Nature Center.

by R. Dewire



This baby oriole is just over a week from going on its own.

Photo: R. Dewire

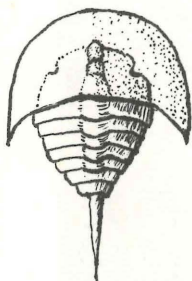
SALUTE TO THE

Limulus polyphemus is his name, but everybody calls him horseshoe crab. He's not a crab; in fact he's like no other creature in the world. He has no face, nor even any head. A pair of dull grayish eyes, "compound" like those of ants, are at the sides of his rounded shell, and he has an extra pair, pinpoint size and hard to find, in the middle in front so he can see where he is going. His mouth is a bristly hole underneath for sucking in mud worms and small soft things, and round it his eight spindly legs are bunched. Behind the domed front shell is a triangular mid-section with backward pointing spines along the sides, and attached to this by a pivot-like joint is his long, stiff, slightly tapered tail. For breathing he uses a set of leathery flaps under the triangle which act as gills, and also work as paddles when he swims. He has no brain to speak of, but a highly developed and efficient nervous system. His blood is blue.

Around the beginning of July the female horseshoe crab comes to the beach to lay her eggs. The male comes too, in search of the female. He must be there when the eggs are laid to release his milt into the water, and so fertilize them. Otherwise they would never hatch. So he hitches a ride on the female's back, clamping on with a special pair of pincers, and, as the male is always smaller than the female, his added weight hinders her not at all. She is extremely choosy. Weather and waves, water and sand and tide must be exactly right, and her search may take a long time. When at last she is satisfied, she shoves herself into the sand to eye level and slowly lays two or three hundred eggs about the size of barley. Then she heaves herself up and glides away to deeper water. Some three weeks later the babies, about a centimeter long, hatch and uncurl. Of course they have no tails—no room for that in such a tiny egg. But little *limulus* grows fast and soon looks like a miniature adult. When he gets too big for his shell he sheds it, much as the true crabs do. Often the brittle, empty, outgrown shells are washed up on the shore, but there are fewer than there used to be—perhaps because on our crowded



600-550 Million
years



400 Million yrs.

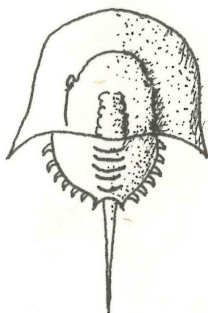
HORSESHOE CRAB

beaches trampling feet scatter or break the eggs before hatching time. No one knows just how old a lucky horseshoe crab may get to be, but the biggest, oldest ones sometimes have barnacles growing on their backs.

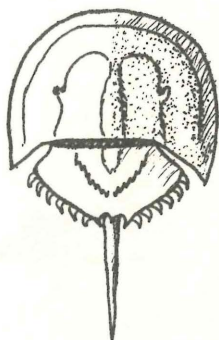
Five hundred million years ago *limulus*' ancestor crawled the sea floor with his relatives, the trilobites. He looked a little different then—his front shell was smaller, his midsection was made of segments like an armadillo's, and his tail was tiny. As the millions of years rolled by and the trilobites died away, small improvements appeared in *limulus*' design, until he became the marvel of engineering that he is today. His domed front shell is neither thick nor heavy, but perfectly shaped to withstand pressure and even blows. It is a sandy mud color so that, half buried, he becomes almost impossible to see. If a wave flips him onto his back he can right himself with his strong tail. Underneath he's mostly space, with so little meat that not even very hungry creatures try to eat him. A shark of course could bite his shell in two, but sharks don't dig things off the ocean floor. An octopus could turn him over with its suction cups, but octopus and *limulus* never live in the same waters. Although his fossils have been found all over the world wherever there once were shallow seas, *limulus* now lives only on the Atlantic coast of North America, and in some places in the Indian Ocean.

Pick up a horseshoe crab by the tail. Frantically his feet wave—he must get quickly back into the sea or die. Waded out a bit, lower him gently into the water and let go. Instantly he turns upside down and becomes a well-designed boat, heading at speed down and away to deeper, darker, safer water. At the bottom he will right himself and glide smoothly and almost invisibly off.

Limulus polyphemus deserves our respect. For more than five hundred million years he has gone quietly about his business doing no harm to anything at all. Not many creatures can make such a boast, least of all Man, newest and most destructive of all living things.



270 Million yrs.



180 Million yrs.

by Dena Humphreys

TWO FIELD PROJECTS FOR SUMMER

PROJECT NO. 1

A NIGHT WALK



Many animals, including flying squirrels, are most active at night. But all of these animals we call *nocturnal* are not always active at the same hours. Some are most active in the early evening, whereas others move about late at night and still others in the early hours before dawn. In order to understand the part each animal plays in the complicated natural world, you might take a night walk, or even several walks at different times of the night.

In daylight mark a trail through a wooded lot. An area that contains fallen logs and old stumps and has a thick leaf cover is best. Walk silently along the trail at dusk. You may need a small penlight for close-up observations, but don't use it for walking or for looking into the tree tops. The light may give you away. Your eyes will adjust to the darkness.

Examine under each log by carefully rolling it over. What animals can you find? What are they doing? Replace the log. Check into stumps under leaf litter and into the holes in trees and the ground. Keep a list of what you find. Listen for the sounds of insects, frogs, flying squirrels and night active birds. Can you hear mice rustling in the leaves on the ground? Or are they insects? Look up into the treetops for flying squirrels. If there is water nearby, listen for the squeak of bats or the call of nighthawks.

Go back along the same trail later at night and then again just before dawn. Check the same logs, holes and stumps. Record what you find.

During what hours are the greatest *numbers* of animals active? The most *species* of animals? Do



temperature, wind or humidity seem to influence the activity?

If you can't stay awake for three or more trips along your trail in one evening, try one trip a night for three nights at different times each night.

J. H.

Seen on a night walk

SPECIES	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	WEATHER
Worms				
Insects				
dung beetle				
fire fly				
June bug				
moth				
mosquito				
stag beetle				
cricket				
Amps. & Reps.				
frog				
toad				
Birds				
night hawk				
owl				
veery				
wood thrush				
Mammals				
bat				
opossum				
flying squirrel				
porcupine				
raccoon				
rabbit				
white-footed mouse				

From the *Curious Naturalist*

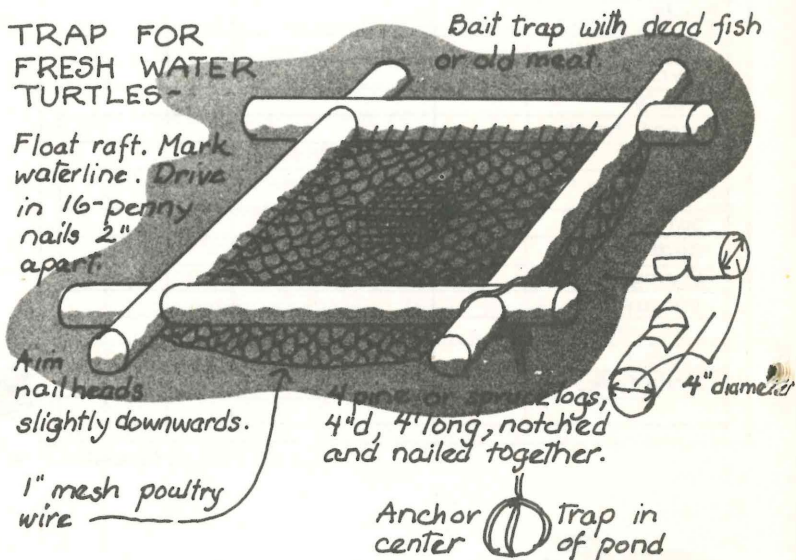


PROJECT NO. 2

FRESHWATER TURTLES

Our freshwater turtles can make an interesting study. How many are in a given pond? How long do they live? How big a territory do they range over? Where do the turtles of a given pond go to nest? Who eats the eggs? How many hatch? The questions go on and on. You might want to undertake a study of the turtles in your area. Here are some hints.

HOW TO BUILD A TURTLE TRAP:



Turtles will climb up to get the bait inside but cannot crawl out.

FRONT

SPECIES: _____ NUMBER: _____
 LENGTH OF CARAPACE _____ SEX: _____
 WIDTH OF CARAPACE _____
 WEIGHT _____
 LOCATION: _____
 BEHAVIOR NOTES: _____

BACK

DATE: _____
 TEMP: _____
 TIME: _____
 CLOUD COVER: _____

KEEP RECORDS OF YOUR TURTLES:

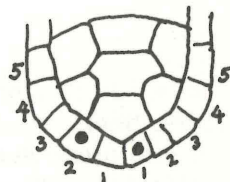
Use a record card something like this.

HOW TO MARK YOUR TURTLES:

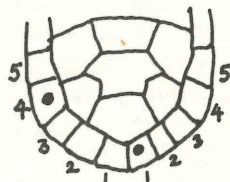
Record keeping will mean more to you if you can keep track of each individual turtle. There is a simple and painless way to mark turtles so that you can recognize individuals. However it is not something to do just for the fun of it. Do not mark turtles unless you are sure you are going to complete a serious study project, such as a science project for a science fair, a scout troop special project, or a school class project.

Notice the shell scales around the rear of the carapace. Five of these scales on each side hang over the rear legs and tail. Use a hand drill to carefully drill combinations of small holes through these plates. Then keep a record of the numbers.

Using this system you will be able to mark 35 of any one species in a pond. With a little thought you can adapt the system to mark even more.



this turtle is
R1, L2



this turtle is
R1, L4

From the *Curious Naturalist*

GARDENER'S GUIDE

This is the time to order bulbs. The nurserymen place their orders with foreign firms in the early Fall and you will have more choice and better quality if you order early.

Gather your everlastings or straw flowers when the blossoms first begin to unfold. Hang small bunches with heads down until the stems and flowers are well dried. If you wait until the flower is open, the dried flower will turn inside out with stems too much in evidence.

Trim hedges as needed. Deciduous hedges usually need several cuttings. Evergreens often need only one.

Watch your trees and shrubs. Winter injury often does not appear until the hot weather arrives. The cure is plenty of moisture and a moderate feeding.

THE FARMER'S CALENDAR FROM 1811 SUMMER

The whole face of the country is now alive with busy haymakers, reapers, tillers, & etc. My neighbor has just told me of an excellent method to preserve clover when got in green, or not sufficiently dried. 'Tis this: First place a stratum of clover, then one of straw, or if you have no straw old meadow hay will answer the purpose, then your clover again and so on alternately. You will find the straw to preserve the clover, and the cattle will greedily devour the whole; the straw or old hay being impregnated with effluvia from the clover.

As we have had for years past what farmers call *catching* weather in hay time, perhaps it would be most prudent to keep but a small quantity of grass down at a time. Some seem almost distracted to get down their whole farm, when often comes a storm—they lose both the hay and labor.

Be careful about drinking cold water too freely; nor yet is there need of pouring down spirits as some are in the habit of doing. Neglect not your corn, which may be hilled in cloudy weather. Attend to salting your cattle. Gather herbs while in bloom; this may be thought of little consequence; but tis a fine thing to be your own doctor.

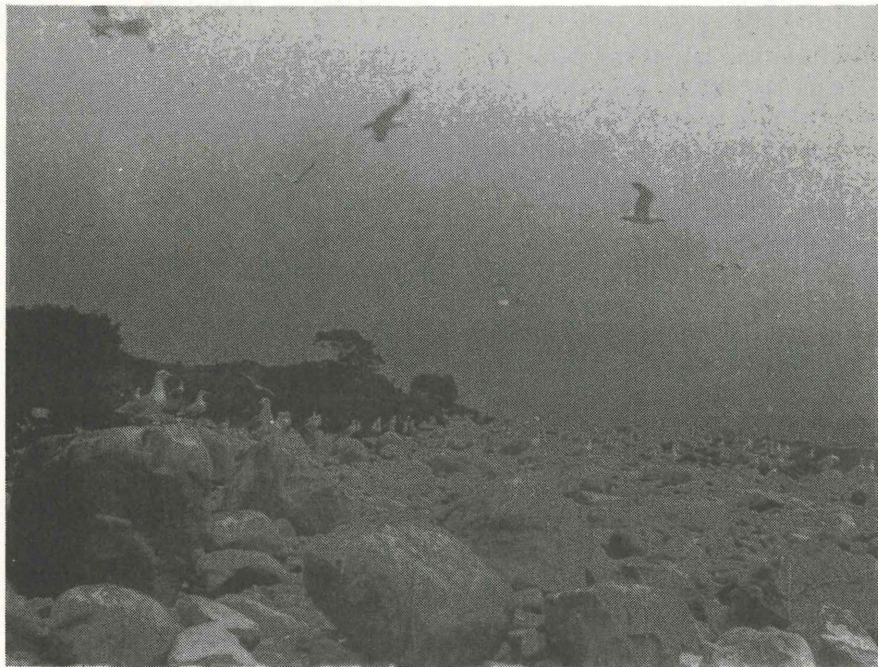
GULLS—OUR EVER-PRESENT WATER BIRD

One of the most easily found birds along the shoreline is the gull. Gulls are important scavengers and help a great deal in keeping beaches clean of dead marine animals that wash up on shore. There are several species of gulls to be found along the shoreline in the summer. All are easily identified and can probably be found during an afternoon at any of the coastal beaches.

The herring gull is the most common of all. It is the gull most commonly called the "sea gull". It is large and its legs and feet are pink or gray. These birds look quite different between their young and adult stages. As first

year birds they are very dark brown but each succeeding year become lighter until the fourth year when the front is white and the back gray. Often, but not always, the adults will have an orange spot on the bill near the tip.

Looking similar but about a third smaller in size is the ring-billed gull (see front cover). The ring-bill is named for a dark stripe that rings the bill. Since some herring gulls may also have this dark stripe, you cannot depend on this alone. In identifying the ring-billed gull use the combination of the ring bill, small size and legs and feet that will range in color from green to yellow. These birds are



A typical nesting colony of the herring gull, our most commonly seen gull and most often called "sea gull".

Photo: R. Dewire

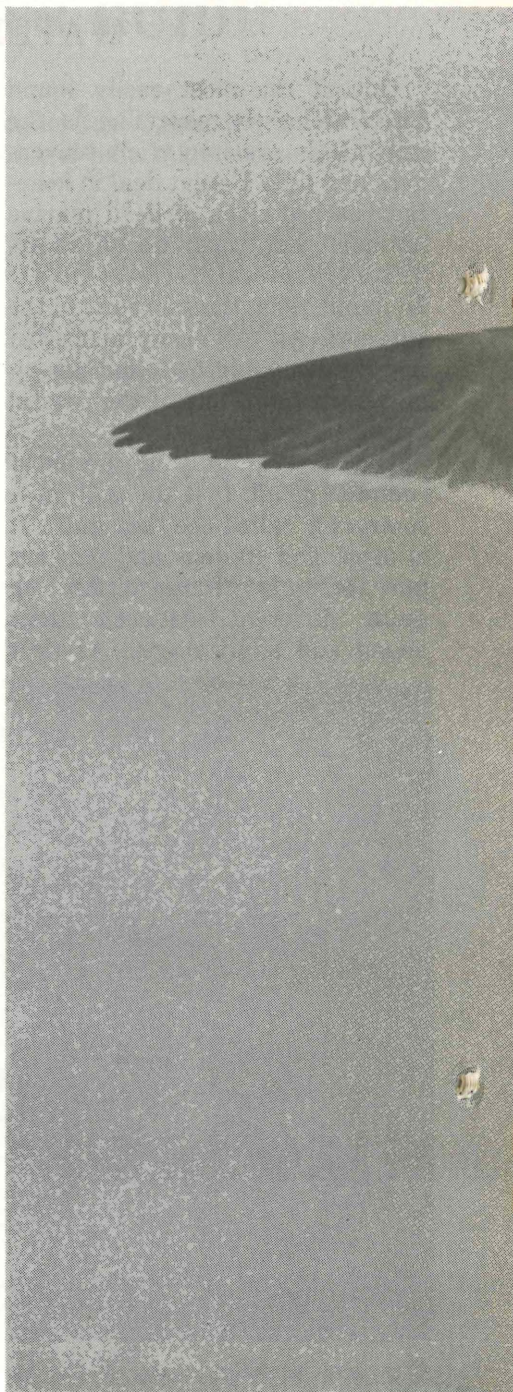
commonly found on beaches. Unlike the herring gulls they do not nest here but for the most part nest in fresh water areas such as the great lakes. Birds here in the summer are non-breeders.

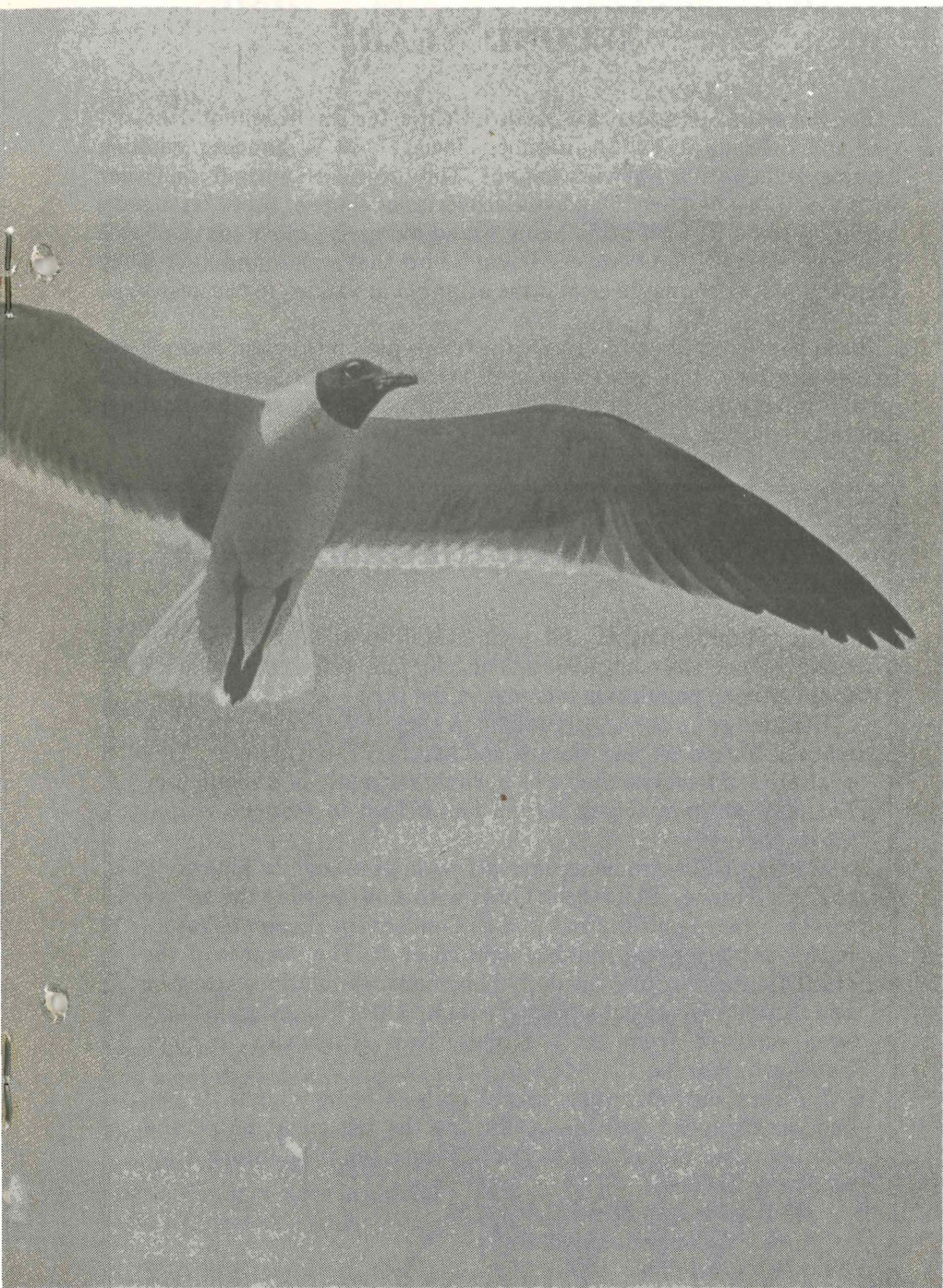
The large great black-backed gull is quickly identified by the coal black wings and back on an otherwise white body. These birds are a bit larger than the herring gull, something readily noticeable when the birds are sitting together. Black-backed gulls are becoming more common on Long Island waters each year. Originally a more northern and oceanic gull, their population have been spreading southward more each year. They nest in small numbers in the large herring gull colonies throughout the sound.

The final species to watch for this summer is the laughing gull. During the spring and early summer the bird is easily spotted by its all black head. These gulls are the smallest of the group being a little smaller than ring-billed gulls. As the summer progresses, these gulls begin to lose the black head and by fall will be white headed like the other gulls. Their small size very dark gray wings and back and black legs and feet will readily identify them. Colonies of these gulls nest off New Jersey and Massachusetts and birds are frequently seen along our shores especially in late summer.

Watch for all these gulls this summer. It is nice to know the actual names of each one instead of lumping them all under one name —“sea gull”.

by R. Dewire





*The laughing gull is one of our most handsome gulls.
Look for it particularly in late summer.*

GULL BANDING PROJECT BEGINS SECOND YEAR

For the second summer, the Nature Center for Environmental Activities and Saugatuck Valley Audubon Society will be banding nestling herring gulls on the Norwalk Islands. The project was begun last year with over 1,000 nestlings banded. Recoveries of some of these birds have begun to come in with birds being found along the coast south of this area, the most distant recovery being a bird that was found near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina three months after being banded in the nest.

Birds banded this year will have the bands put on the right legs whereas last year they were banded on the left leg. Watch for bands on the legs on any immature gulls (brown in color) that you may see this summer and fall.

WANTED: GULL INFORMATION

The Atlantic Coast Gull populations have been increasing rapidly since the early 1900's. This can indirectly be attributed to the human population increase in the U.S.

Because gulls are opportunistic in their behaviour, they have learned to feed at open dumps and sanitary landfill areas. This year around food resource which would normally be a regulatory factor in an animal population, has helped to reduce the gull mortality rate.

Herring Gulls are being marked with an orange or blue wing tag, and Greater Black-back Gulls with a silver wing tag at two local sanitary landfill areas in S.E. Connecticut. Each tag has an individual letter and number painted on it. The purpose of the study is to determine the daily behaviour, population structure and distribution of gulls from the dump sites. Tagged gulls have been reported from St. Andrews, New Brunswick to Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Information concerning tagged gulls is being sought. If you observe a tagged gull please include the tag color, letter and number, time of day and location. Please send the information to: Frank R. Haeni

382 Washington Street
Norwich, Connecticut 06360

POEMS BY DAVID LOWRIE

Age 11

BIRDS

Birds in the trees,
Birds in the skies,
They say the owl is very wise.
They say the eagle is king of the sky.
So many birds.
My O my.



DOGWOODS

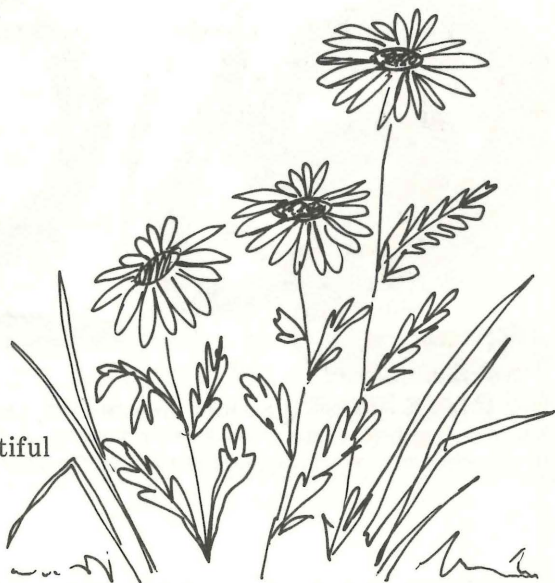
I love dogwoods with blossoms white,
And the ones with pink are a beautiful sight.

Branches outspread reaching for the sky,
And it looks to me like they'll never die.

NATURE

Daisy, Rose, Tulip,
Flowers all are these.
Elm, Maple, Oak,
And all of these are trees.

These are parts of nature,
And you surely will agree,
That nothing is more beautiful
Than a flower or a tree.

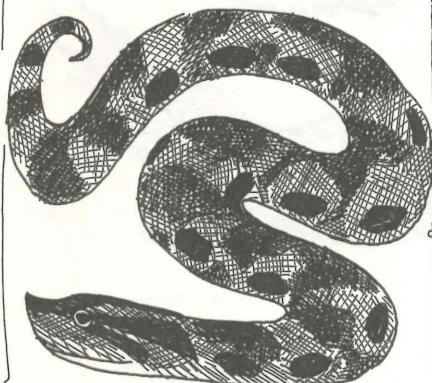


NON-POISONOUS SNAKES

TTR.

HOGNOSED SNAKE

(*HETERODON PLATYRHINOS*) TO 2'
A SHORT FAT SNAKE WITH A TURNED
UP NOSE. EATS TOADS AND FROGS.
BROWN PATTERN OR SOLID BROWN.

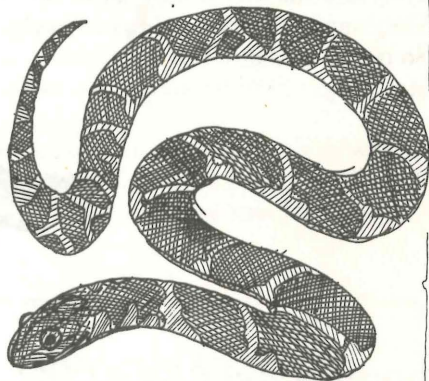


HOGNOSED SNAKES **HISS** TO SCARE
YOU AWAY. IF YOU DONT LEAVE,
THEY ROLL OVER + PLAY DEAD!

WATER SNAKE

ABOUT 2'

(*NATRIX SIPEDON SIPEDON*)
LOOK FOR HIM IN OR NEAR SWAMPS,
STREAMS + PONDS, WHERE HE SWIMS
AFTER FISH + FROGS. DARK BROWN.

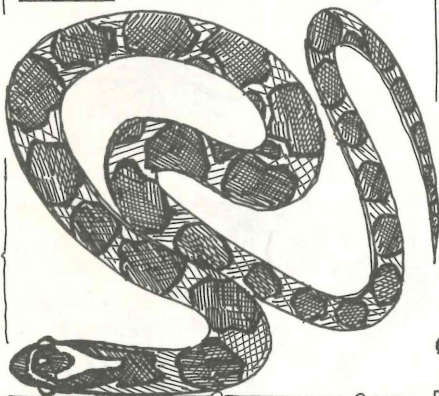


NOTE: NON-POISONOUS SNAKES OFTEN
MAKE "RATTLESNAKE NOISES" BY
VIBRATING THEIR TAILS IN DEAD LEAVES!

MILK SNAKE

2 TO 3'

(*LAMPROPELTIS T. TRIANGULUM*)
LOOK FOR THE LIGHT "Y" OR "V" ON THE
HEAD. BODY HAS BROWN PATCHES EDGED
IN BLACK. FOOD: SMALL MAMMALS.



BLACK RAT SNAKE

4 TO 5'

(*ELAPHE OBSOLETA OBSOLETA*)
YOU'VE SEEN HIM SLIPPING INTO YOUR
STONE-WALL. THIS BIG BLACK SNAKE
HAS A WHITE CHIN + THROAT.



FOOD:
SMALL
MAMMALS

THE BLACK RACER (*COLUBER CONSTRICTOR CONSTRICTOR*) 3 TO 5 FEET
A LONG, SLENDER BLACK SNAKE. MAY FLEE TO BUSHES + LOW BRANCHES
IF FRIGHTENED. FOOD: SMALL MAMMALS, REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS, INSECTS.

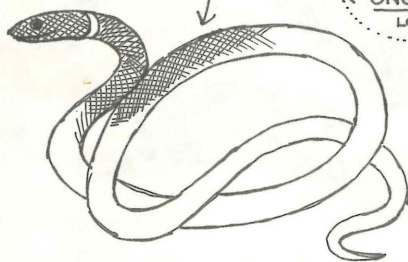
NON-POISONOUS SNAKES

RINGNECK SNAKE

(*DIADOPHIS PUNCTATUS EDWARDSI*)
A WOODLAND SPECIES FEEDING ON
WORMS, SMALL SALAMANDERS, + FROGS.

GOLD RING

BODY IS SLATE
GREY OR
GREY-BROWN



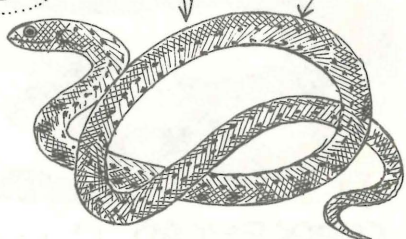
SMALL
ABOUT
ONE FOOT
LONG

BROWN SNAKE

(*STORERIA DEKAYI DEKAYI*)
ALSO CALLED DEKAY'S SNAKE - THE
NAME OF THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED
IT. COMMON IN CITY WASTE LOTS.
FOOD: INSECTS, WORMS, + SLUGS.

BODY IS BROWN

TWO ROWS
OF BLACK
DOTS

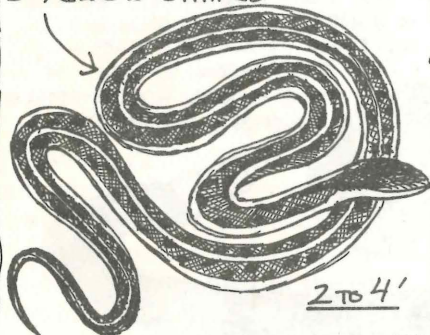


SNAKES ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT IN THE ENVIRONMENT AS BIRDS
OR MAMMALS ARE: PROTECT THEM + ALL WILDLIFE IN YOUR YARD.

EASTERN GARTER SNAKE

(*THAMNOPHIS SIRTALIS SIRTALIS*)
COMMON. LIKES WET AREAS. DARK
BODY WITH 3 YELLOWISH STRIPES.
FOOD: AMPHIBIANS, TADPOLES, + FISH.

3 YELLOW STRIPES



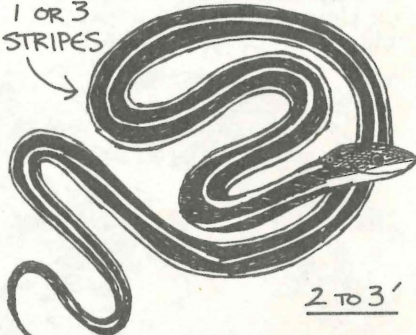
2 TO 4'

TTR.

RIBBON SNAKE

(*THAMNOPHIS SAURITIS*)
ALSO LIKES WET AREAS, STREAMS, +
CAN SWIM IN WATER AFTER FROGS,
SALAMANDERS, AND FISH.

BODY VERY DARK OR BLACK
1 OR 3
STRIPES

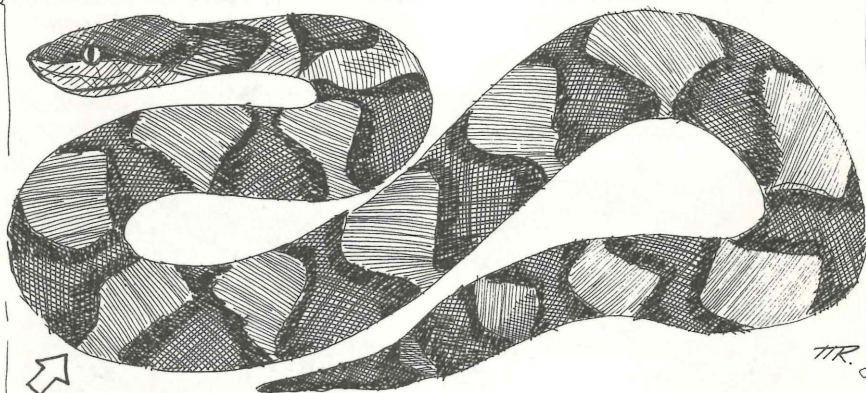


2 TO 3'

THE GREEN SNAKE (*OPHEODRYS VERNAUS*) ALL GREEN, ABOUT
2 FEET LONG. PREFERS GRASSY AREAS + MEADOWS. FOOD: INSECTS.

POISONOUS SNAKES

VENOMOUS SNAKES ARE NOT AGGRESSIVE, BUT THEY SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE. THE VENOM HAS TWO PURPOSES: IT IMMOBILIZES PREY, AND CONTAINS ENZYMES WHICH AID IN DIGESTION.

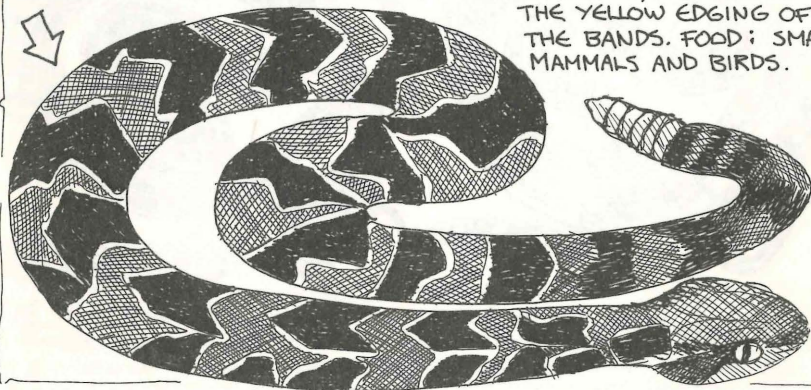


COPPERHEAD (AGKISTRODON CONTORTRIX MOKASEN)

2 TO 3 FEET ITS AVERAGE LENGTH, THIS BEAUTIFUL REPTILE MUST BE AVOIDED. THEIR DENS ARE IN ROCK-SLIDES, USUALLY NEAR WATER. DURING THE SUMMER THEY TRAVEL AWAY FROM THE DENS, AND RETURN AGAIN IN THE FALL. THE HEAD IS COPPER-COLORED, THE BODY IS TAN OR COPPER WITH BANDS OF DARK BROWN. FOOD: RODENTS, BIRDS, REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS, AND INSECTS.

TIMBER RATTLESNAKE (CROTALUS H. HORRIDUS)

AVERAGE 3 FEET. DENS IN STEEP ROCK LEDGES + ROCK-SLIDES NEAR WATER. USUALLY RETREATS, THEN "RATTLES." HEAD AND BODY YELLOWISH OR LIGHT BROWN, WITH DARK "V"s OR BANDS EDGED IN YELLOW. TAIL DARK. A DARK PHASE OCCURS, ALL DARK BROWN, BUT SHOWING THE YELLOW EDGING OF THE BANDS. FOOD: SMALL MAMMALS AND BIRDS.



*Text and illustrations by Monica Russo

OUR NON-GREEN WILDFLOWER— INDIAN PIPES

Throughout July and August in our woodlands one may come upon a single or more often group of pinkish white plants with scaly stems and the top of which is curled over to give it the shape of a pipe standing on its end. This is the Indian pipe, one of those exceptions to Nature's general rules.

Many people think that it is related to mushrooms and is a fungus since it has no green color and even the "flower" doesn't look like one. Despite this appearance it is a genuine flowering plant. If the inside of the end is looked at carefully, a magnifier will help, the typical parts of a flower will be seen. From the flower will come seeds that are the same as any other wildflower's seeds.

Another interesting note, considering that the Indian pipe has no green is that it is a member of the wintergreen family! It survives in the same way that fungi does, by drawing its food from decaying plant material, usually leaf mold on which it grows. A theory as to the reason for this lack of green is that the plant adapted to the condition of deep shade where it grows by simply not requiring the sunlight that all green plants need to make food.

Once the flowers start to go by, the "bowl" of the pipe will straighten upward and the plant will turn dark brown. Transplanting or

starting from seed is next to impossible as the plants need very special conditions that people cannot match.

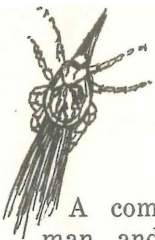
There are other non-green wildflowers. A relative of the Indian pipe is called pinesap and differs in that the stem will have several flowers at the end instead of just one. Pinesap may be brown or red in color. A group of orchids called coralroots also lack green. Watch for all of these plants this summer and take the time to look at one closely to see the structure of these interesting plants.

by R. Dewire



A single Indian pipe sticks up through the leaf litter.

Photo: Julie Worth



TROUBLESOME TICKS

A common parasite of dogs, man, and other large animals in our area is the American Dog Tick or Wood Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*). Ticks attach themselves to their hosts with their mouth parts and remain attached until engorged with blood. An unengorged adult Wood Tick measures about 3/16 inch in length, is brown to grey in color, has eight legs and a very flattened body shape. After feeding, the engorged female reaches a length of 1/2 inch and becomes bluish grey in color. The somewhat smaller male may be distinguished by a hard white-marked shield covering his back. In the female this shield covers less than half the back.

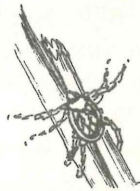
The adult stage is the only stage which usually attacks man or dogs.

Although the American Dog Tick is a different species from the Spotted Fever Tick prevalent in the West, it, too, may carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, but cases have been rare in our part of the country. The tick does not transmit this disease unless it has fed for 4-8 hours, so prompt removal of all ticks is important.

There are several methods for removing ticks without leaving the mouthparts imbedded in the skin. A steady pull with forceps is often effective. Other methods force the tick to release his hold. A hot match, cigarette, or needle touched to the tick or a drop of alcohol, gasoline, or turpentine placed on the tick will usually cause the mouth-

parts to relax enough to make the tick easy to pull off. After removal, an antiseptic should be applied. In the event that any fever or rash develops, the tick bite should be immediately reported to your doctor.

Dogs should be checked and de-ticked nightly, especially if they run loose in fields or brush. Failure to do so can result in household infestations which are near impossible to eradicate, because of the long life span and complex life cycle of the tick.



Unremoved, the engorged female tick drops to the ground and lays between 4,000 and 6,500 eggs. In about a month these hatch into tiny 1/40 inch, six legged larvae which may live in moist places for nearly a year, waiting for a host. The first hosts are usually mice or other small mammals. After feeding, resting, and molting to the eight-legged nymph stage, the ticks can survive for up to two years waiting for their next host. After another feeding-resting-molting cycle they become adults.

Professional extermination is the only solution to a tick-infested house, and the results cannot be guaranteed as long as a dog remains within the household.

The tick is an annoying pest that will be a part of our outdoor life each spring and summer, but with a little care the more devastating effects of his presence can be eliminated.

by Pamela Rochovansky

FIELD NOTES—

SPRING 1974

Every spring one can always start off a report by saying that the season was an interesting one. This year is no exception. April was very cool with the freezing point reached on many nights. It was also a wet month with only a few days that had the real "spring" feeling. May was also cool with a frost in cooler sections along the coast that knocked down a lot of new plant growth, ferns in particular. With few exceptions this cool trend went right to the end of the month. June finally brought warmth, in fact a common question to be heard was "what happened to spring?" after the coldness of April and May gave way to an early June heat wave that seemed more typical of mid-summer. June was a much drier month with rain seemingly coming just at the right times for the benefit of plant growth.

This was a year for plants. First off, they were earlier than normal in most cases, partly due to the very warm weather in March which got things going early. When the flowers came, they were spectacular. This was particularly true of the flowering trees and shrubs. Such plants as flowering dogwoods, azaleas of all kinds, rhododendrons, and laurels were filled with blossoms. It was also obvious that this would be another year of excellent growth. The thick growth of leaves and new growth on pines and hemlock were indicative of this. Finally, early indications were that it would be a fine seed and berry crop this fall.

If the flowers were early, the birds were not. In fact a major migration never materialized this year. There are always exceptions to any statement that bird migration was poor or late, because there are always representatives of all the species that straggle through, even though there are no "waves" of birds, and such was the case this year. Some of the highlights are as follows:

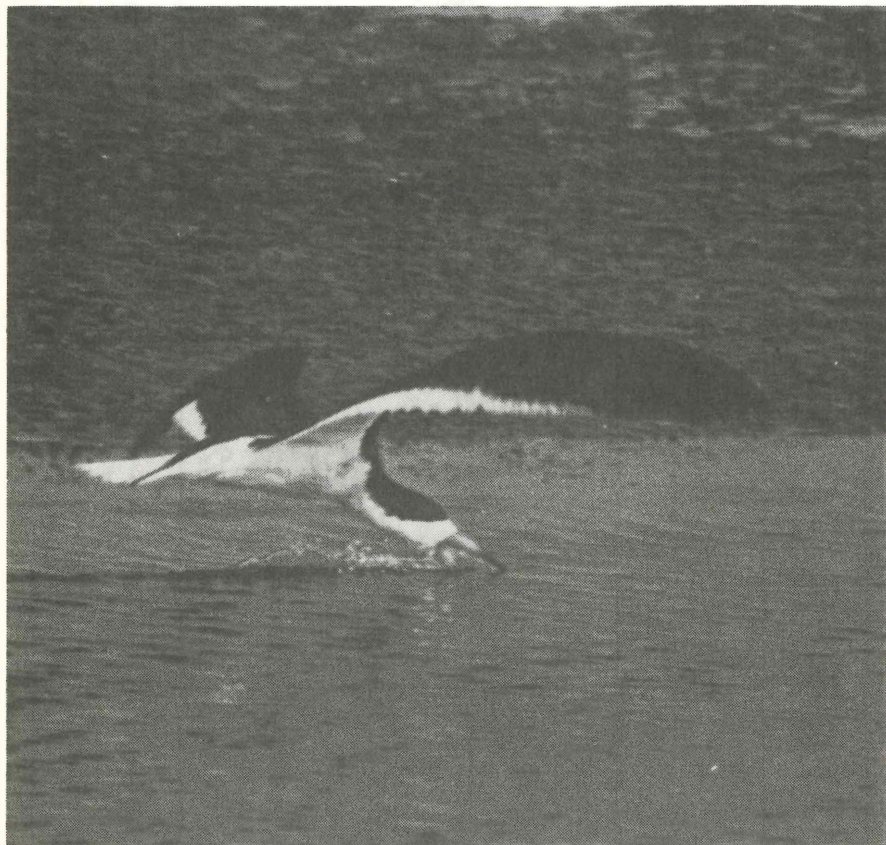
The glossy ibis was the most obvious bird to be increasing in numbers this spring. The one nesting area in the state, on Chimon's Island in Norwalk has increased well beyond the 5 pairs of last year although numbers are not known for certain at this writing. Barn Island in Stonington continued to get its usual little blue herons in April and once again raises the question as to their possible nesting somewhere in that area. A Louisiana heron was also recorded there in April.

Shorebird migration yielded no unusual birds this spring with the exception of a golden plover at Harkness Park in Waterford on April 20th. Little gulls persist in the New Haven area and the two top species of terns seen this spring were a black tern in Stratford and two caspian terns of Norwalk.

A red-headed woodpecker spent the day at a suet feeder in Waterford in May and blue-gray gnatcatchers were numerous in migration throughout the state in April and early May.

All the species of warblers normally seen in the state in spring migration were recorded in May although no big flights were in evidence. A prothonotary warbler was seen in Easton in early April, a Kentucky warbler in Westport in mid-May and a fabulous day in New Haven yielded a protonotary, Kentucky, and cerulean warbler all in the same day. The rare hybrid Lawrences warbler was seen in Old Lyme in late May. Pine siskins and evening grosbeaks were recorded into May and a dickcissel was at a feeder in Waterford in late April. White-throated sparrows remained into mid-May at feeders and a white-crowned sparrow was in Old Lyme in late April.

The Acadian flycatcher returned again this year to Devil's Hop-
yard State Park in East Haddam. A check on the area in early
June revealed at least 3 singing males along the stretch of stream
running through the park and just south of the boundary.







*Although rare, the black skimmer is invariably seen a few times along
our coastline during the warm weather.*

Photo: Ken Karsten

NATURE'S CALENDAR

by Trudy Gardner

				
		1	Evening serenade "insect orchestra"	2
		3		Full maize moon
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